

NO PLACE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Read the following article about the development of the game Tetris. Consider how the person who invented this game would have been treated in our economic system. Answer the questions that follow the article.

The game of Tetris was the brainchild of Alexi Pazhitnov. He and Vadim Gerasimov developed the game in the fall of 1985 in Moscow, which was then part of the Soviet Union. At the time, Gerasimov was a seventeen-year-old math wizard who enjoyed computer hacking along with Pazhitnov. As Tetris was fine-tuned, copies of it began to circulate around Moscow and beyond.

The Soviet Union had a command economy. There were no copyright laws because in a command economy almost everything is owned by the state. Computer software programs are no different. Pazhitnov and Gerasimov handed over the rights to Tetris to the Soviet Union Computing Center, which had the right to sell or license the rights to Tetris to someone else. It took this agency years to begin production and distribution of Tetris within the Soviet Union.

1. Why didn't the Soviet Union Computing Center try to sell this game to earn large amounts of money?

2. Why couldn't Pazhitnov and Gerasimov produce and sell this game themselves?

3. The game Tetris was invented by a citizen of the Soviet Union. Why were many more people in the United States able to play this game than people in the Soviet Union?

4. How does this story show why people in command economies often don't work as hard as people in market economies?

5. If this game had been invented by a citizen of the United States, what might he or she have done to become a successful entrepreneur?

